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SUBJECT: GERMANY ON AFGHANISTAN AND NATO FOREIGN MINISTERIAL

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¶B. STATE 4834

¶C. 2006 BERLIN 3452

¶D. KABUL 218

Classified By: Minister-Counselor for Political Affairs John Bauman for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary and comment: German officials welcomed the U.S. comprehensive approach to Afghanistan, covered in the Secretary's meetings January 17-18 with Chancellor Merkel and

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Foreign Minister Steinmeier, and followed up January 22 by the Deputy Chief of Mission. Berlin expects to deploy reconnaissance Tornados to Afghanistan, and Embassy pushed for there to be no restrictive conditions on their use and for FM Steinmeier to make a forward-leaning statement at the January 26 ministerial. More broadly, the German Government is interested in greater cooperation on civilian assistance, including possible joint U.S.-German reconstruction/development projects in the south, and enhanced coordination of U.S. police training efforts with a proposed EU police training mission. This openness presents opportunities to leverage greater German engagement and enlist German support in improving public understanding of the breadth of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. German officials were skeptical on the idea of ground-based spraying of the poppy crop, but their objections may pale in comparison to President Karzai's decision not to approve spraying this year (Ref D). End summary and comment.

¶2. (C) During her January 17-18 visit to Berlin, the Secretary discussed Afghanistan with Chancellor Merkel and

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Foreign Minister Steinmeier. Those conversations will be reported septel. German officials who participated in the meetings subsequently have told us that the Secretary's emphasis on the USG's coordinated approach in Afghanistan was especially welcome and effective.

¶3. (C) Following on those discussions, the DCM January 22 met separately with Chancellery senior-director-equivalent Geza von Geyr and Foreign Office Deputy Political Director Ulrich Brandenburg. They covered the possible deployment of reconnaissance Tornados, police training, counternarcotics, and reconstruction and development. The DCM pointed out that the U.S. would be making significant new contributions at the ministerial, and that we looked to Germany, as a leader within the Alliance, to do so as well.

¶4. (C) TORNADO DEPLOYMENT: Deputy Political Director Brandenburg told the DCM that the deployment of reconnaissance Tornados remains under review; a decision likely would be brought before the January 31 cabinet meeting. Although a new mandate was not strictly necessary,

parliamentary and public opinion made it advisable for the Government to seek one. Since Steinmeier would address the Foreign Minister in advance of a cabinet decision (or any parliamentary review), he would have to stop short of making a formal offer to NATO -- to do otherwise would be counterproductive, as it would fuel accusations from the Bundestag that the Government was usurping legislative prerogatives. Von Geyr asked for any information the U.S. had about which assets would take over the reconnaissance function after the German Tornados -- knowing someone was ready to take over would make parliamentary approval easier. The DCM underscored that any Tornado deployment should take place without restrictions that make it more difficult for the mission to succeed, such as a restriction on sharing of information with OEF. The DCM pressed Brandenburg and von Geyr for the most forward-leaning possible statement of German intentions at the January 26 ministerial, pointing out that it is possible to be clear while underscoring the necessary legislative procedures. (Note: Our latest information from Bundestag sources is that the Bundestag will not approve the supplementary mandate next week -- action likely would wait until the Bundestag resumes its work the week of February 26. End note.) Brandenburg thought that the Tornados would deploy by April.

¶5. (C) EU POLICE TRAINING: Von Geyr and Brandenburg both welcomed the U.S. emphasis on a comprehensive approach, integrating civilian and military efforts. This focus during the Secretary's recent visit had been effective, both said. Von Geyr encouraged public statements to this effect by senior U.S. officials, which would make the domestic German debate more constructive. It would also create a better climate for decisions regarding an EU police training mission in Afghanistan. Berlin recognized the U.S. had a major police training effort in Afghanistan. Von Geyr urged the U.S. to consider how U.S. and EU efforts in this area could better be coordinated. At present, France and some others were against expanding European police training in

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Afghanistan, arguing in part that the EU police mission in Kosovo should be a higher priority. Brandenburg expressed hope that the February 12 GAERC meeting would decide to go forward with an EU mission.

¶6. (C) COUNTERNARCOTICS: The DCM raised counternarcotics and pushed for greater German support for the Afghan Government's CN program, especially in Badakhshan. Von Geyr offered no substantive comment, but noted that German NSA Heusgen spoke with his UK counterpart Nigel Sheinwald January 19 on this topic. Brandenburg said the German PRT in Kunduz had provided some support to Afghan CN activities (and their U.S./UK advisors). However the individuals apprehended were released under pressure from Kabul, an incident that for Germany exemplified the difficulties confronting counternarcotics policy. Germany feared an aggressive CN campaign could worsen the security situation (which Brandenburg alleged was already deteriorating in the north). The low level of public knowledge about the effects of spraying could be exploited by misinformation. (Note: Ref D, which indicates President Karzai has decided against ground-based spraying in 2007, may remove spraying as an issue for the Germans, but their reluctance on eradication likely will apply to other CN support activities as well.)

¶7. (C) RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT: Von Geyr pressed for joint U.S.-German funding of civilian projects, including in southern Afghanistan. (This was an idea raised by NSA Heusgen in his most recent visit to the U.S.) Germany wanted it to be clear that, although the German military was focused on the north, the German Government's engagement was country-wide, according to von Geyr. Brandenburg emphasized the need for better coordination among NATO Allies: NATO had to ensure that military and civilian authorities consulted in advance about what reconstruction projects would be needed in areas where military operations were likely. He noted that

it had taken too long for ISAF officials, in the aftermath of Operation Medusa, to find ways to use reconstruction funds Germany had offered. Germany and perhaps Norway might make a proposal to this effect at the Ministerial, which could complement the projects list being drawn up by UNAMA.

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